

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-21 (Canceled)

22. An implantable medical device comprising:
- a substrate;
 - a polymeric coating supported by the substrate, wherein the polymeric coating includes a therapeutic agent; and
 - a barrier over at least a portion of the polymeric coating, wherein the barrier is biodegradable.
23. The implantable medical device of claim 22, wherein the polymeric coating is biodegradable.
24. The implantable medical device of claim 22, wherein the therapeutic agent has a lower diffusivity in the barrier than in the polymeric coating.
25. The implantable medical device of claim 22, wherein the barrier is a homogeneous layer.
26. The implantable medical device of claim 22, wherein the barrier comprises a plurality of discrete deposits.

27. The implantable medical device of claim 26, wherein the plurality of discrete deposits reduce the release rate of the therapeutic agent from the polymeric coating by creating a tortuous diffusion path for the therapeutic agent.

28. An implantable medical device, comprising:
a substrate adapted to be implanted at a site in need of therapy;
a polymeric layer supported by the substrate, the polymeric layer containing one or more therapeutic agents, wherein the therapeutic agents are delivered to the site in need of therapy by diffusing through the polymeric layer to the site; and
a biodegradable barrier contacting at least a portion of the polymeric layer.

29. The implantable medical device of claim 28, wherein the biodegradable barrier degrades at a rate slower than the diffusion rate of the therapeutic agents through the polymeric layer.

30. The implantable medical device of claim 28, wherein at least a portion of the biodegradable barrier originally contacting the polymeric layer at the time of implantation of the implantable medical device remains contacting the polymeric layer at a point in time after substantially all of the therapeutic agent has diffused through the polymeric layer and has been delivered to the site in need of therapy.

31. The implantable medical device of claim 28, wherein substantially all of the biodegradable barrier originally contacting the polymeric layer at the time of implantation of the implantable medical device remains contacting the polymeric layer at a point in time after substantially all of the therapeutic agent has diffused through the polymeric layer and has been delivered to the site in need of therapy.

32. The implantable medical device of claim 28, wherein the polymeric layer is biodegradable.

33. The implantable medical device of claim 28, wherein the biodegradable barrier comprises a plurality of discrete deposits intermixed with the polymeric layer.

34. A method of making an implantable medical device, the method comprising:
forming a coating on the device, wherein the coating includes a therapeutic agent and a polymer; and
forming a biodegradable barrier capable of reducing a rate of release of the therapeutic agent from the coating after implantation of the device into a body of a patient.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein the coating is formed by applying a plurality of layers of polymer and/or therapeutic agent to the device.

36. The method of claim 34, wherein the biodegradable barrier is formed by applying discrete deposits to the coating.

37. The method of claim 34, wherein the biodegradable barrier is formed by intermixing discrete deposits with the coating.